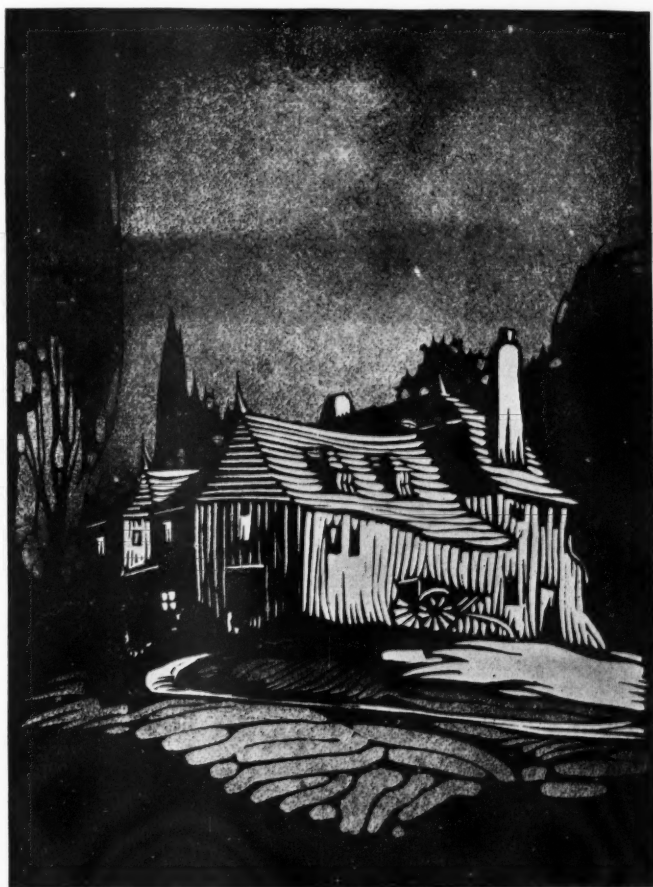


# DESIGN

Vol. XXIX, No. 8

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

January, 1928



Richmond I. Kelsey

## BLOCK-PRINTING STEP BY STEP

*Richmond I. Kelsey*

**P**RINTING with more than one block, often results in a more difficult process than is necessary because of the apparent complexness of the problem. However, given a simple problem and clear, definite instructions and the work simplifies itself. The following problem is reduced to the simplest terms both from the standpoint of design and color harmony—leaving the majority of the student's attention for the new task—printing with three blocks. The results show how much real charm and beauty can be obtained from simple designs and harmonious placement of tones of one hue.

### PROBLEM

Color Print, using three blocks. One color, four tones (dark, medium, light, white). Ship motif.

### MATERIALS

Three linoleum mounted blocks (5x7) all exactly the same size.

One small stencil knife.

One gouge "U" shaped and one "V" shaped.

One tube of pure color in oil, any color desired.

One tube of white oil, 1 soft pencil, plate glass pallet, Japanese paper.

Hand press of some kind (old fashioned hand letter press), a brayer roller if possible. This is not necessary, but will aid greatly in obtaining a smooth distribution of ink on the block, and will prohibit the ink from hanging at the edges. (This is otherwise known as a printer's proof roller.) If this cannot be obtained a brush can be used.

### CUTTING

Draw a five by seven rectangle on a convenient size piece of paper of medium weight, as drawing paper. Proceed to prepare your sketch just as you would for any drawing (within the rectangle). When the sketch is completed, take a very soft pencil and go carefully over all the outlines and essential parts of the design. Then by pressure of the thumb nail on the back of the design transfer the finished drawing to the surface of the linoleum. This you will find easy if you have used a medium weight of paper, and a soft pencil. To hold the paper in place, while rubbing, thumbtack the paper to the sides of the block. Now choose that portion of the design which is to be the darkest tone (in this block most of the outlining and all black masses). Then carefully emphasize those portions that are to be used in this block, by going over the transfer on the block with the same pencil, at the same time making any corrections in the drawing that are visible, as it is often easier to see errors when seen in the reverse than before. Now proceed to cut the first block. (This is the *key block*.) In starting the cutting it is well to give quite a bit of thought before plunging into the job. You will find that even when you know quite a bit about cutting you will make a mis-cut or some similar mistake if you do not think before cutting. In the first place, draw a quarter inch border all around the block. *In all cutting you must remember to cut out from the line*, so as to leave the line reinforced, for if you cut under the line it will cave in and not hold up under pressure of the press. To make this clear, we will take a pyramid for an example; if the pyramid is standing in its natural form it is the strongest kind of structure, and one can place tons of weight on the top, and it would hold easily, while if you were to invert the pyramid, and put the same weight on it the pyramid would be sure to



Mexican Pottery, 1830  
Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 1



Figure 2

crumble. Also examine closely a piece of printer's type for an example. A great deal of interest can be obtained in cutting by the variety of stroke, or in other words, different technique. Technique is varied by pressure on the gouge or by the amount of surface cut out with the knife. There is no end to what can be done with the "V" gouge if one handles it carefully. Twisting the wrist while using the gouge and many small grouped gouge strokes are two ways of varying technique.

When the first block is carved, take a proof print of it (cardboard pads should be used to print on), and check your cutting, correcting all errors and omissions. Next, a second proof is taken, using abundant paint and a non-absorbent paper; one with a glossy finish is good. This is done for the purpose of transferring. Then take the second linoleum block, and place it face down on the wet proof, careful to get it exactly in place. Now place this in the press and give it quite a bit of pressure. Remove it from the press and upon pulling the paper from the block you will have an exact replica of the first block on the surface of the second linoleum block. Take the original sketch and draw over the parts to be used in the second block and transfer it to the linoleum, being careful to key the transfer with the first carving on the surface. You now have two transfers on the surface of the linoleum, the original sketch with the necessary parts emphasized, and the results of the carving on the first block, both of which should coincide. From this it is very easy to make a drawing of that which you want in the second block, which is, anything that is dark or medium tone. It is not necessary to cut out the background you have left in the first block for it is darker than anything



Figure 3





Figure 4

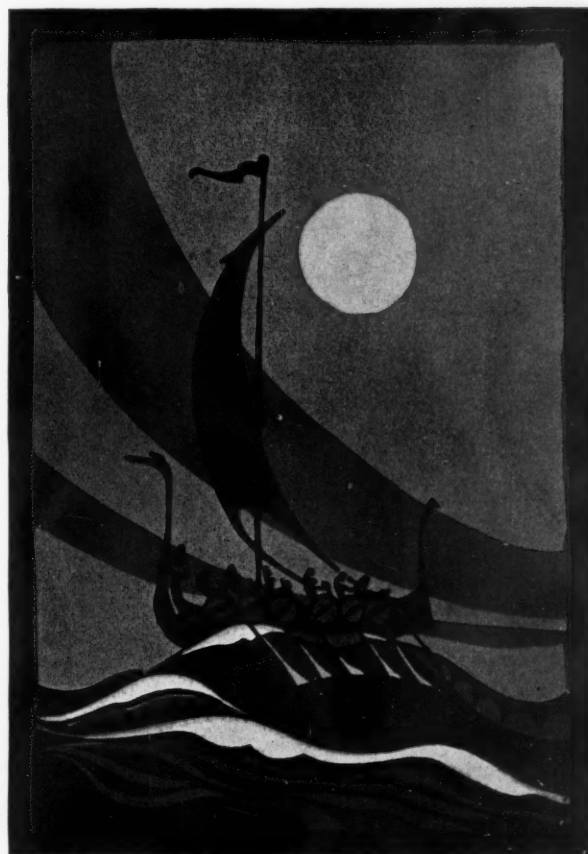
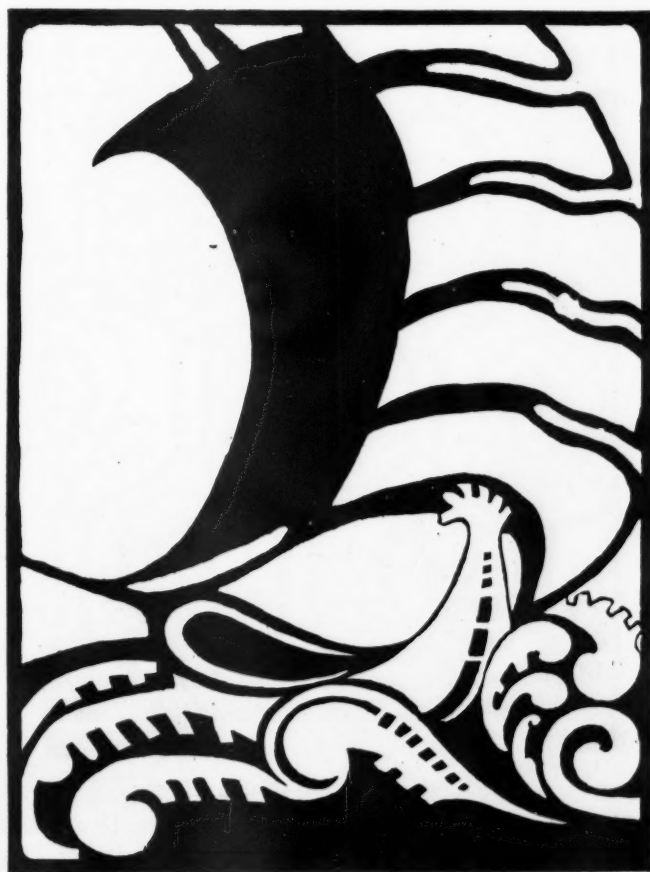


Figure 5



Eugene E. Thurston

in the print and will cover any lighter color. Be sure to leave all parts of the block that are to be the medium tone. When the cutting is completed take a proof of the work and make all corrections, and then take the final proof, this time printing the first block on top of it to see if the two blocks key properly, which they should. Repeat this process for the third block, but keep in mind that the only thing that you have to cut out of the last block are those portions of the block which are to be white, and all the rest will take care of itself as you will see by the example in Figure 3.

#### PRINTING

Take your pure color for the deepest value; here it is a deep blue, mix white with it until you get the tone desired. A piece of glass answers as a very good palette for this. Then take the brayer and roll it back and forth until you get the print an even blend, and ink the third block, the one you made last. If you are using a brush to take the place of a brayer, follow the same procedure. Lay the Japanese paper on a piece of cardboard and then place the inked block face down on the paper, place it in the press and give it strong pressure. This block takes more pressure than any other, as it has more surface to cover. After having printed as many prints as are desired, mix the next tone by adding more of the pure color. When the necessary tone is gotten, proceed in the same manner to print the second block, being careful to get it exactly on the first print and make a true key. Repeat this for the last block, using the darkest pigment for this printing. If all steps have been followed closely, you should have a clean cut, harmoniously toned, well designed block print.



## DESIGNING FROM NATURAL FORMS

*Nellie Hagan*

FOR an early problem in the design course we find it very worthwhile and interesting to select as a subject something that is familiar to all and which we see every day. It seems that nothing is more common and plentiful than leaves which have been chosen for the subject of this lesson. Leaves offer a wide range for the imagination, and unlimited opportunities for conventionalization and the creation of beautiful design motifs. As a preparation for this work a large variety of leaves were gathered, one hundred and forty in all, which were pasted on thin bond paper and pressed between the pages of a book for future use. This method not only preserves the leaves in their natural smooth condition, but keeps them fresh and green, as well. When transferred to the portfolios or notebooks, they afford a valuable supply of ideas for the winter's work. The ancient Persians, Chinese and Japanese were adepts in leaf and tree form designing, so the pupils were interested in doing some research work along this line. Several museum prints of embroidered fabrics and decorated pottery were brought in to help stimulate the imagination. These, together with the natural leaves, were kept before the class while they worked.

In teaching leaf analysis it is very helpful to explain the three most fundamental geometric shapes, the circle, square and triangle, to which all leaves may be reduced, and to keep in mind the generic form of the particular leaves that

are chosen for the work in hand. For developing simple, unstilted ideas from the natural forms, the medium offering greatest freedom and fewest difficulties is ordinary soft charcoal and practise paper, thereby concentrating entire attention on form and balance of light and dark areas. The first consideration of the leaf design was its size, which was limited to no more than five inches in diameter. At the top of each sheet was made a careful drawing of the leaf which was to be used as a nucleus, and then the pupils proceeded to fill the sheets with as large and varied a collection of ornamental leaf shapes as their imagination would permit. The idea in this lesson was not to copy the natural leaves, but to utilize them merely as suggestion. An elm leaf may be taken as an example. Make an outline drawing of it, using the charcoal. This drawing should be made with a broad, firm line. Now add a short stem and insert a midrib for the dominating part, and there results a simple, bi-symmetric shape of nice proportions.

Next, the work was displayed on the wall for observation and comment, and the best units from each group were selected for further development. Tracings of these were made on Japanese paper, and from this point, the work was carried on with brush and India ink. The shapes were embellished by the addition of interesting light and dark detail, and were finally transformed into satisfactory



Tea Caddy Design—Nellie Hagan

Flowers are Scarlet with Orange No. 3 in centers. Stems and connecting lines and bands throughout design Deep Turquoise. Background of panels, Gold on Satsuma with soft enamels.





Leaf Forms for China Decoration—Nellie Hagan

design motifs. For this part of the work many of the pupils employed purely imaginary figures which were very quaint and fanciful. Others used suggestions from nature: several short, broad lines along the midrib were added for veins, and helpful to enrich the center. From spots and other defects on the natural leaves dots of different sizes and various other small figures were introduced into the motifs for detail and balance. To be sure, there is much in natural forms that must be omitted in the design. One should always choose frugally to avoid too much detail in a single motif. Much time and patience were lavished upon this beginning design project, and altho the work was the simplest kind possible, merely symbols of leaves, there resulted many nice motifs, which showed considerable thought and originality. Careful drawings of these were preserved in the portfolios for future reference and use. For the last part of our problem the pupils selected their best leaf motifs,—usually one having a compact contour,—and these

were formed into decorative trees. The leaf was fitted into its most typical geometric shape, which served as an enclosing form to bind the tree into a whole. At this point, a general plotting of the area took place. It was found that in planning a group, unity is all-important. Also, one must use shapes of varying sizes, having at least one large shape to which medium sized and smaller ones are subordinated. The large leaf was placed at the top of a short, chubby stem or trunk, and smaller leaves were located at both sides of it. Usually three or five leaves composed a tree.

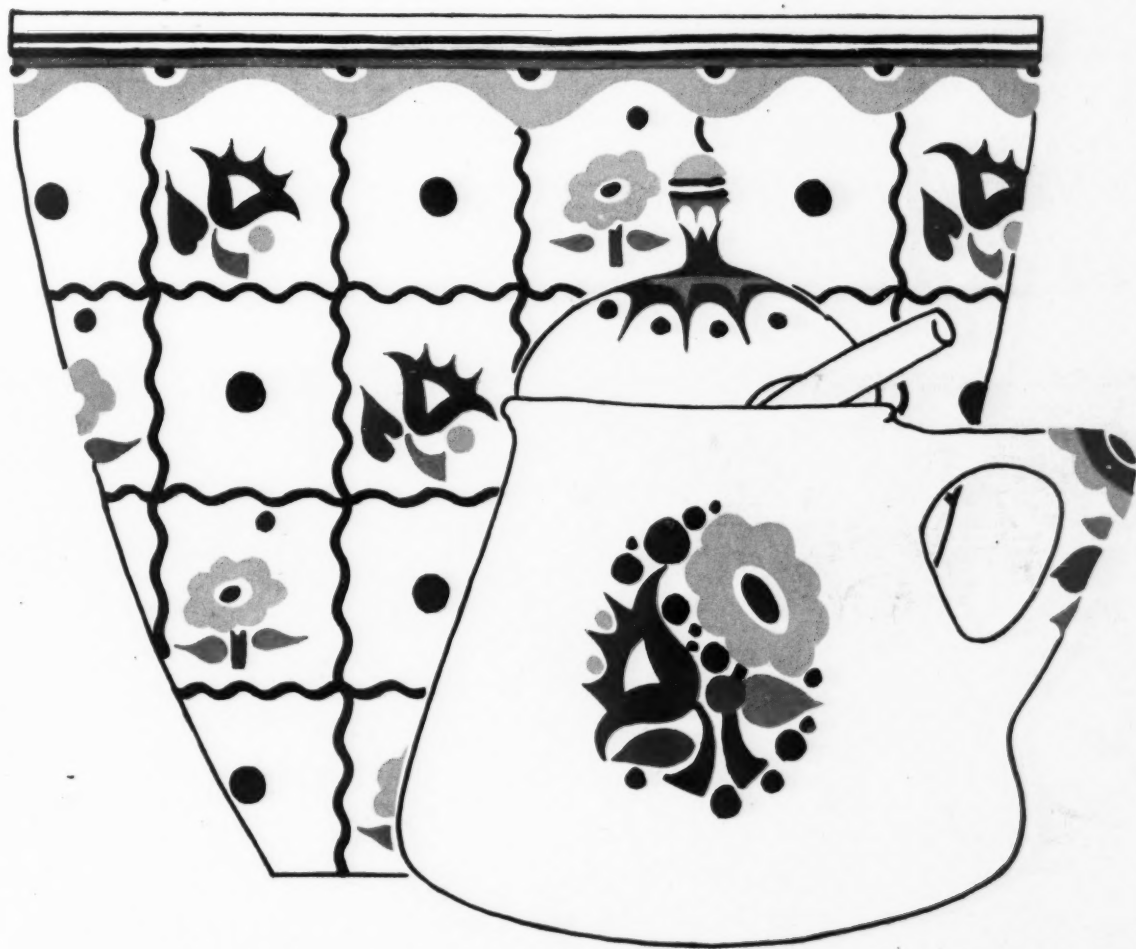
This problem in designing from natural shapes is always interesting and beneficial to an art class, and one which any high school teacher can use with profit. The shape of the leaf furnishes a definite and tangible area in which to work, and this at once inspires confidence. Moreover, it encourages simplicity and directness and the avoidance of over-elaboration, and constantly draws attention to the main principles of design.



Bowl—Nellie Hagan

For white china or yellow pottery paint in all the design with Copper lustre. Wash over the whole bowl with Light Brown lustre and pad until even. For Belleek, Nankin Blue enamel for all the bands and outer edge of leaf-shaped forms. Remainder of design, Emerald Green.

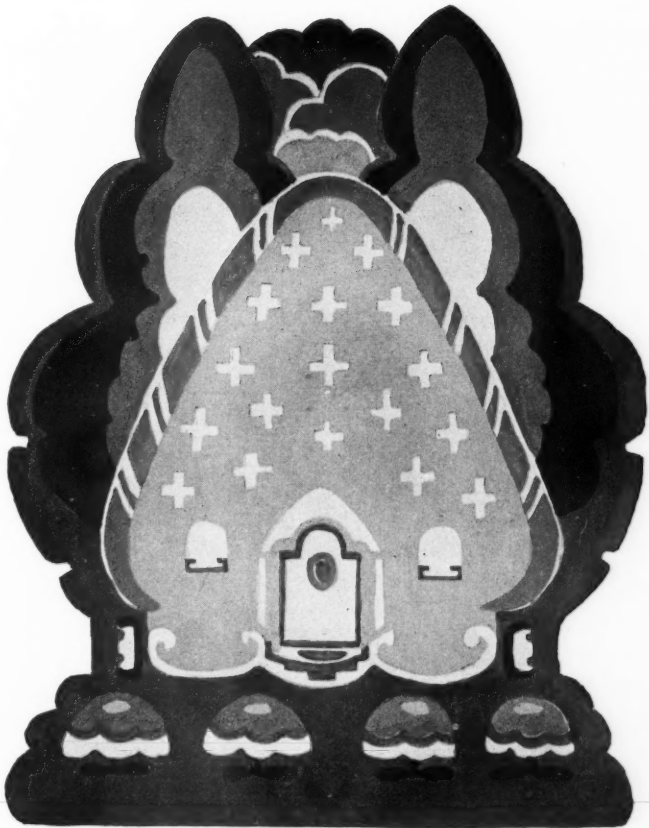




BOWL AND POT-MAY WARNER



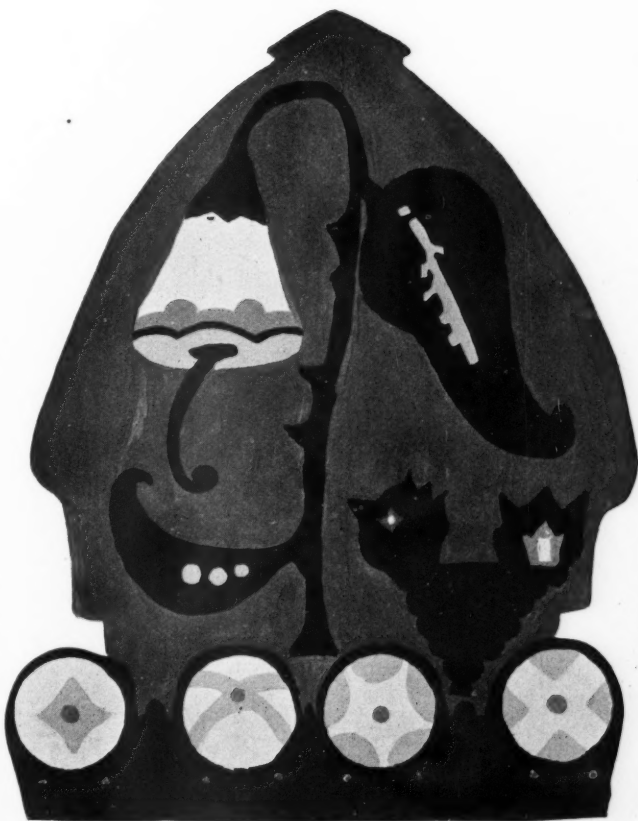




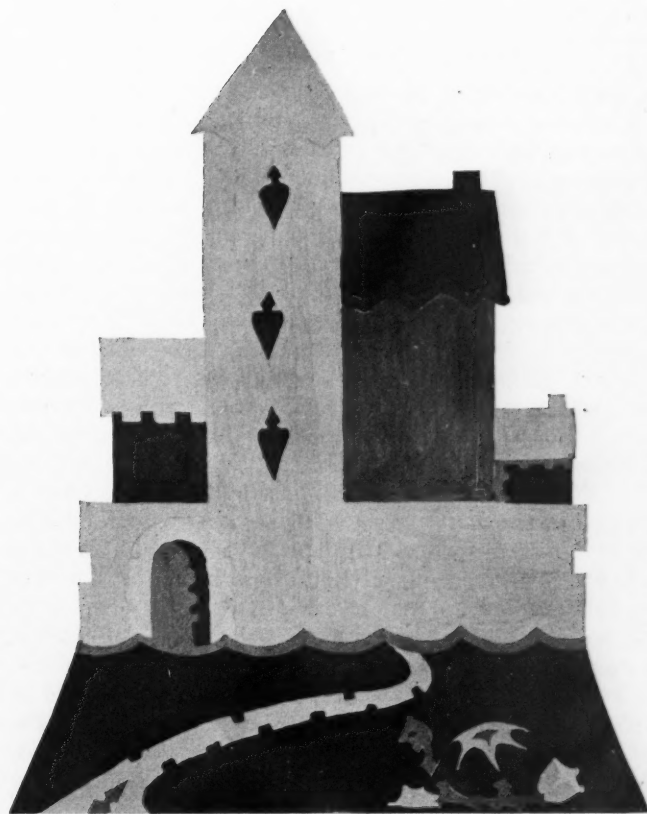
Ruth Toms



M. Reddall



Edna C. Irish

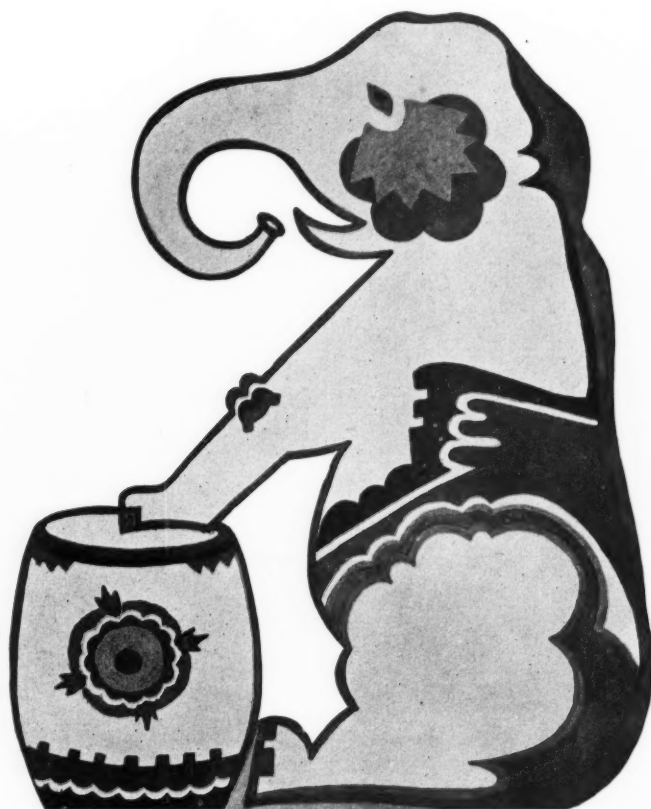


R. Salisbury

Door Stop Designs by Students of Fawcett School



H. Slattery



L. Lowe

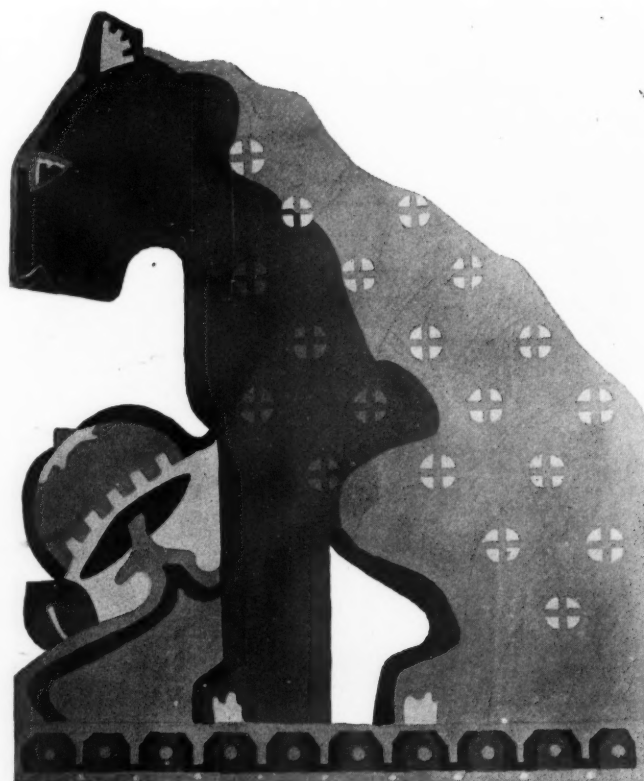
## DOOR STOPS FOR WHEN THE WIND BLOWS

Ida Wells Stroud

*Fawcett School, Newark, N. J.*

WHEN a stiff breeze blows through our rooms, as it so often does on summer days, and we wish all the doors to remain quietly open, the attractive little door stops have a chance to prove their usefulness as well as their beauty. They stand quietly against a door patiently waiting to be of service. Usually made of cast iron, these are gaily painted in enamel colors and make attractive spots if wisely chosen as to color and general style. Any size is used, from two or three inches high to fifteen or even more. There is no limit as to subject and that is one reason why a class had such a good time designing the ones shown here. These designs were limited to nine inches in height and the width was in proportion to the general plan. The lines around the cat design show how the size was established and kept. As may easily be seen almost everything was developed, from a flower to an elephant. Many students felt that the idea of bulk or heaviness was a good one to use—hence so many elephants. While only front views were made the side ones were held in mind and may be easily imagined. There is no back, for all are flat or hollowed out and stand flatly against the door. A strong, firm base is essential for should the door stop topple over at the first strong breeze, it would be of little service, and not ever as good, in this respect, as the old-time carpet-covered bricks of our grandparents' days.

This work was executed on sheets of white bristol board, size twelve by fourteen inches. Many were done in color of a high key, a scheme suitable for bed rooms, or summer cottages, while bright, rich colors would be more appropriate for living or dining rooms. These patient little sentinels



E. Hankinson





M. Siebert



L. Powell



L. Plank

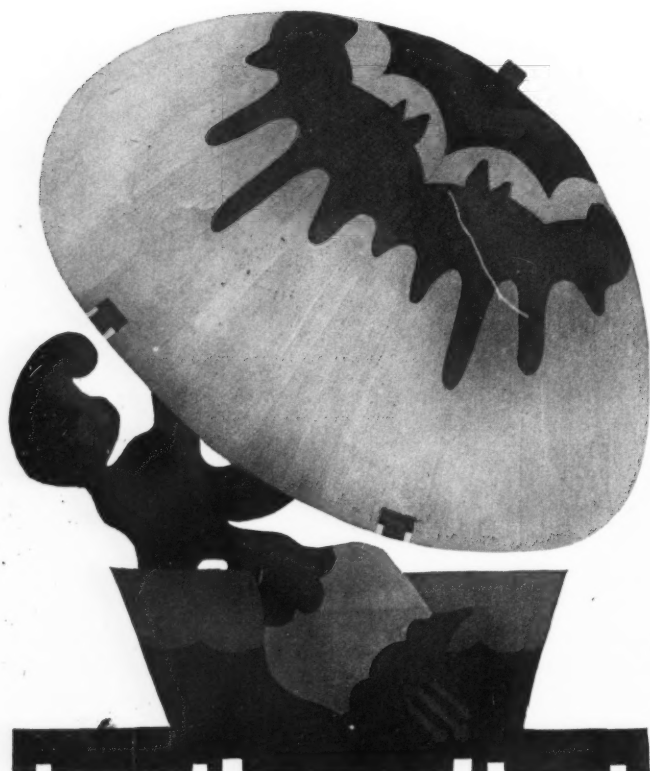
may be as gay and as quaint as one's fancy dictates, for at best, they do not play the same role as a wonderful rug or a piece of elaborate furniture. For instance, take the frolicksome elephant with his barrel, by Miss Lowe, he seems quite capable of keeping steadily on his job when needed. The blissful baby girl being kissed by the bonnie boy, suggests other similar subjects that could be used for stops for children's rooms doors and the dear kiddies always love animals so any of them would be good to use. The calico "low-down" dog would be interesting to some small boy, while the huge flower might go straight to the heart of mother. This design, so beautifully, simple has a medium value of blue for flower and bud, all darks are violet, smaller light shapes on flower and bud are yellow, half intensity, other lights are blue green. Miss Plank shows a rabbit in light violet and medium orange while the dark notes are blue green. The house by Miss M. Reddall has its darks all violet, its medium tones, blue and orange, the lighter, green and very light yellow. Miss Powell's design is in dark blue violet, salmon pink, green, and warm yellow. In the house-and-tree design by Miss Ruth Toms, the house is violet trimmed with salmon pink, there is also blue green and darker gray.

The deer by Miss Slattery is dark blue, with light yellow green, light orange and medium violet, the eye being green and light orange. The scheme of the sail boat by Miss Savad is dark blue, medium violet and light green and orange. Miss Lowe's door step is an elephant in green, cerise, and yellow orange. Another boat is by Miss Krupicka and it has dark blue violet sail and hull, trimmed with orange green and yellow. The waves show green, violet, and yellow. Miss Osmun's owl is green, yellow green, blue, red violet and white. Blue and red violet represent the darks, and yellow green the lighter values while the very light is white.

These are just a few of the endless variety of subjects and the color schemes that classes in school may create. If possible to have the actual door stops made in some heavy substantial material, the interest is greatly increased, for the finished products would be so much more interesting than the idea merely developed on paper. We hope that these may inspire someone to try it.

## SNOWFLAKE DESIGNS

Ruth Harwood

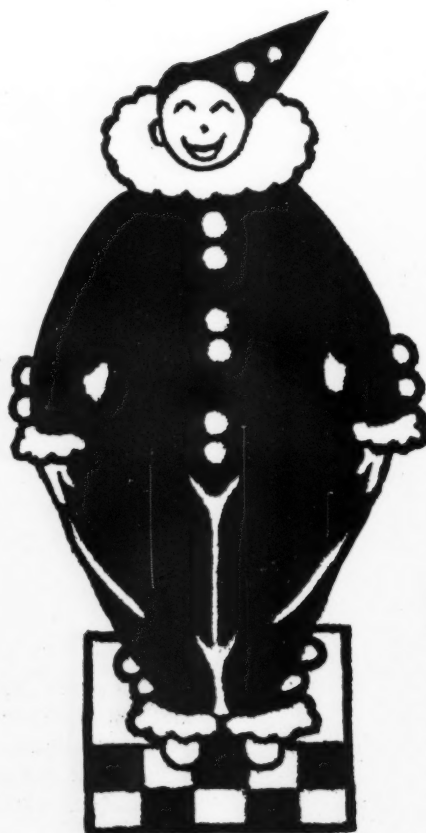
*University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah*

Isabel Cooke

WE were very fortunate in having several large photographs of snow-flakes from which to take our designs. These photographs had appeared in the *American Magazine* with an article about a man who was spending his life in grasping the ephemeral beauty of the dew and the frost and the snow-flakes. A photographer enlarged his loveliest specimens to about four inches diameter so that even the most intricate designs could be easily seen. The students traced several of these and in using them in designs they took the most beautiful portions and conformed all irregularities to the chosen portion. One or two snow-flakes were used in each design and when they were chosen the paper was marked off into fundamental shapes that would fit best the motif selected. After the general frame work of the design had been decided upon the snow-flakes, perfectly drawn, were traced in their spaces. Any changes in shape, size or design can be made to produce the most harmonious and complete whole. Very interesting fabric and linoleum designs can be made in soft coloring from the snow-flake, and because of their intricate decorative pattern they produce a black and white design of sparkling interesting quality. (See designs on pages 154, 155 and 156.)



Edythe Farrell



Julia Hall



J. Osmun





Lily Sittard



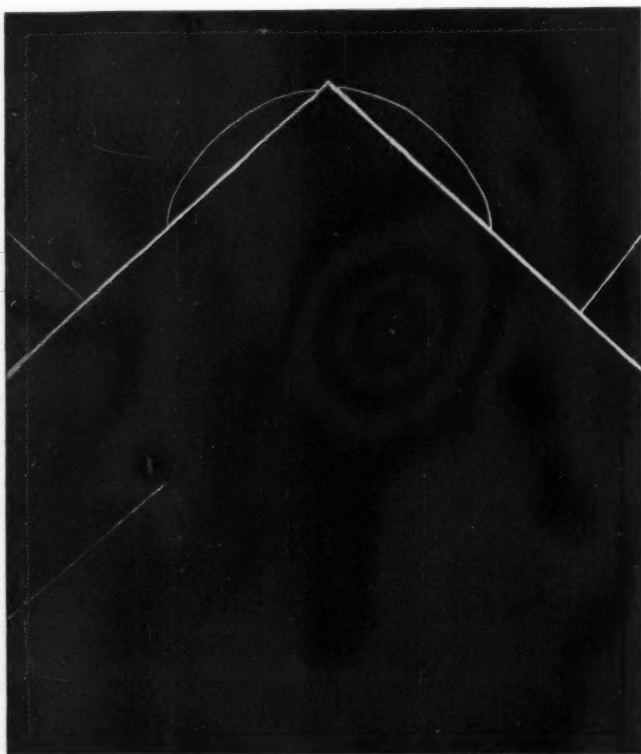
J. Ornstein



I. Kroticka



M. Savad



M. Davidson

## COMMERCIAL BOOK COVER

*Katherine Morrison Kahle  
Mary Benton, Instructor*

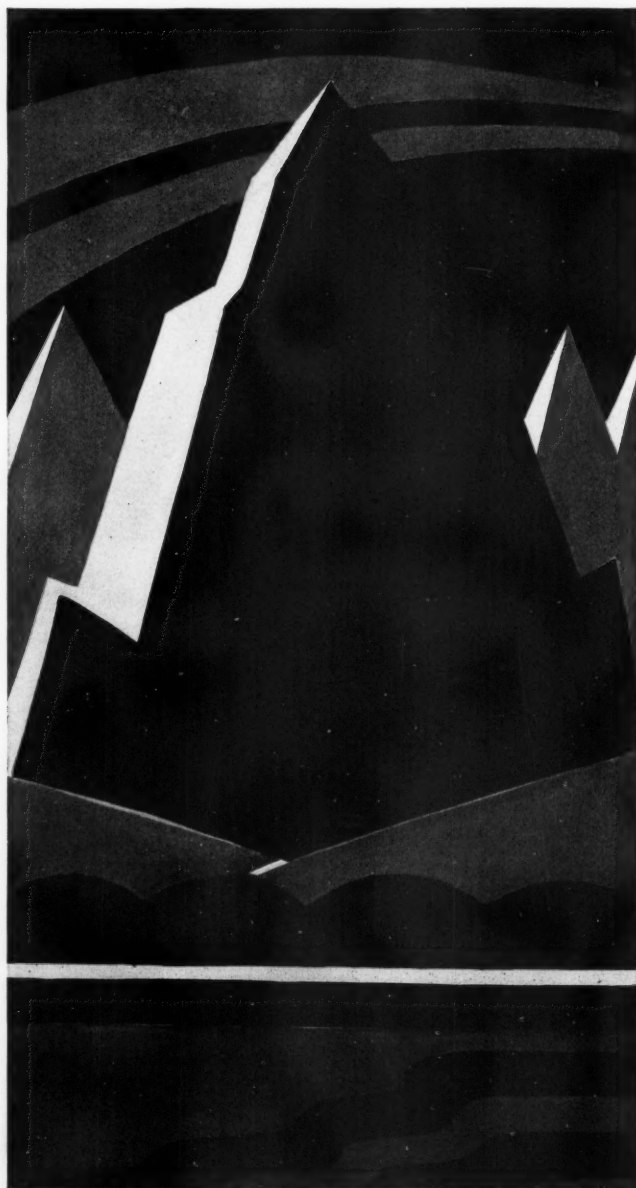
*San Diego State College, San Diego, California*

THE publisher has been quick to apply the new trend in modern art and design to the bindings of books. Looking over a group of more expensive books, one finds the newest color and abstract design applied to the actual bindings of the books, but less expensive books are made to feel content with brilliant and bold designs on their paper covers. These paper folder covers are used, principally on "the best sellers" to attract attention, for the psychology of color has reached the publishing trade, and also for symbolically suggesting the pith of the story. Inadvertently the practice of using colored and patterned paper folders has opened up another field of action to the commercial designer. Therefore the problem of a colored design for a paper book folder has a practical significance as well as being an excellent magnet for the imagination. This problem was given by Miss Mary Benton to her first year design students at San Diego State College. The work shown is the first problem of an untrained class and its quality reflects not only excellent instruction, but also resourcefulness on the part of the teacher and a general alertness to the activities of the trade and craft world.

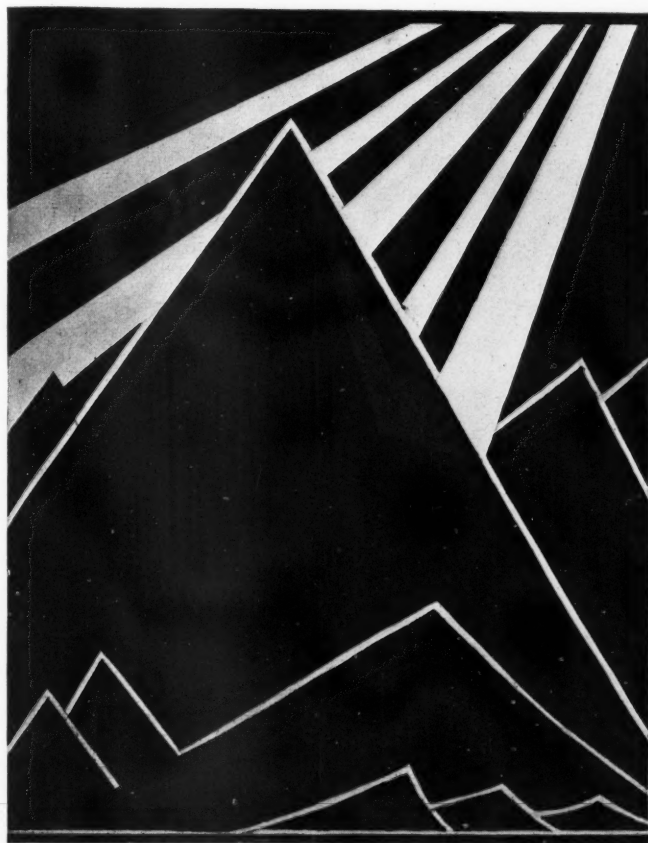
The problem was a paper folder for the book "The Dark Mountain." Design to be within a rectangle. The students were directed to use geometric forms and to work for a symbolism of line, color, and dark and light pattern. The result sought was a fine distribution of dark and light values, making a design which would, because of its symbolism, suggest the spirit of the book—mystery, unsurmountable obstacles and tragedy—and also form a satisfactory commercial cover.

## EDITORIAL NOTE

The Editor and Publisher of DESIGN—Keramic Studio, after twenty-eight years of carrying on this art educational magazine, feel that the time is near for it to pass into the hands of younger people in closer touch with the actual work, and for themselves to turn to their own personal interests. The problem is to find someone who is interested in the work and who would be ambitious to carry it onward and upward. If anyone is interested either personally or as representing an art school or society, a letter to the publishers would bring all necessary information. Very easy terms would be made to the right person—someone who is in touch with the new movements in art teaching in the schools—who is interested in design and the crafts and would keep a high standard, at the same time giving free expression to every new movement which promises to help develop a decorative art representative of this age and country.



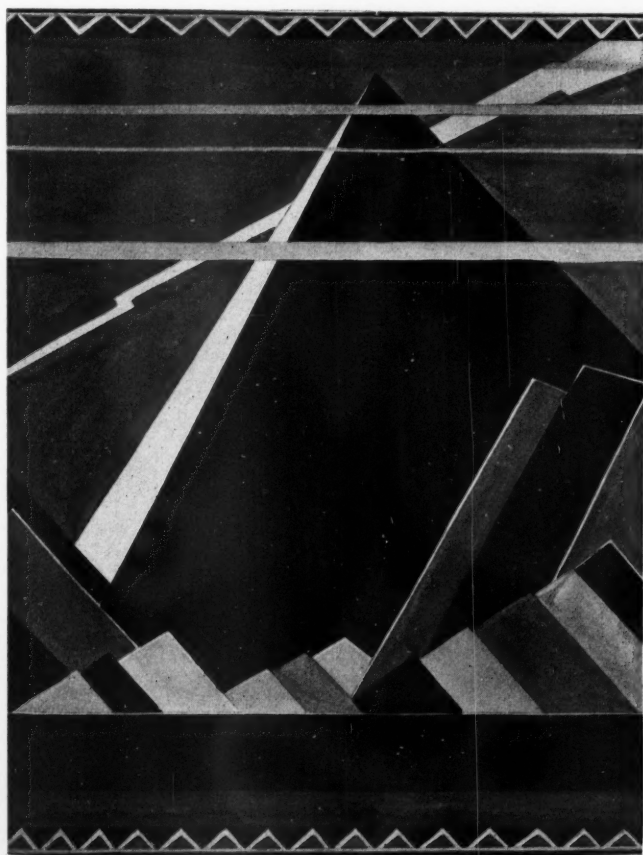
M. Archer



M. Tuley



Margaret E. Ayres

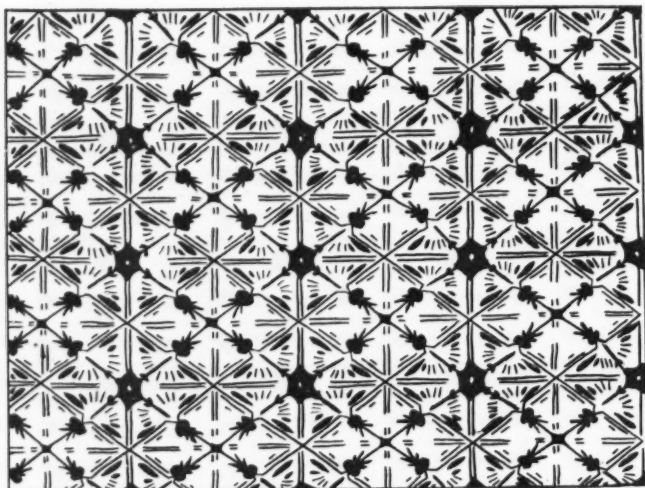


Helen Barr

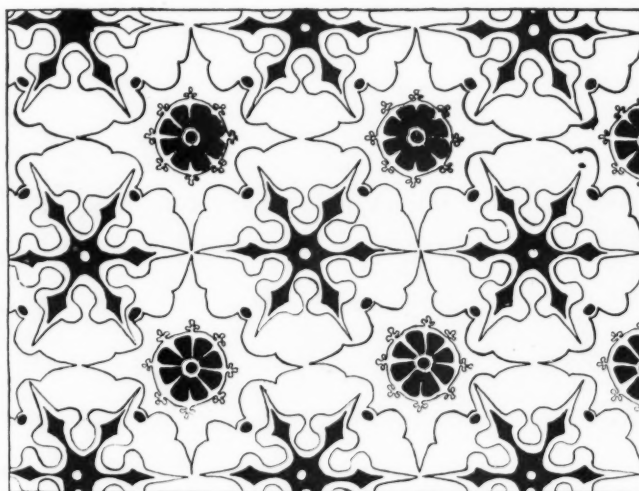


V. Nash

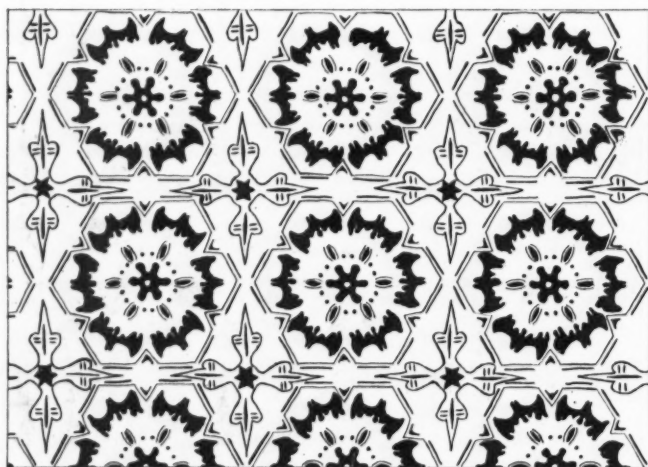




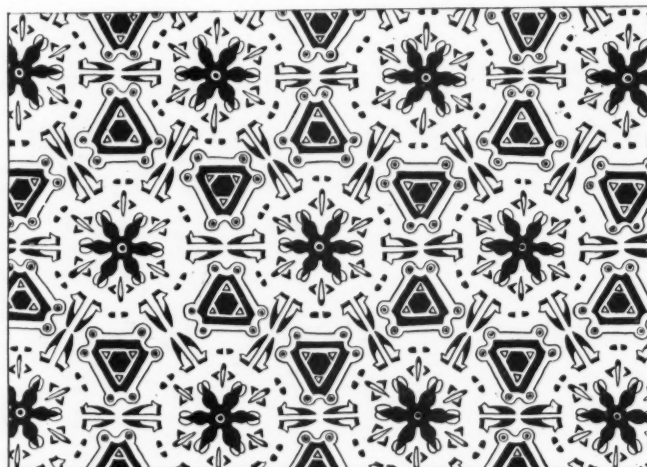
Echo Webster



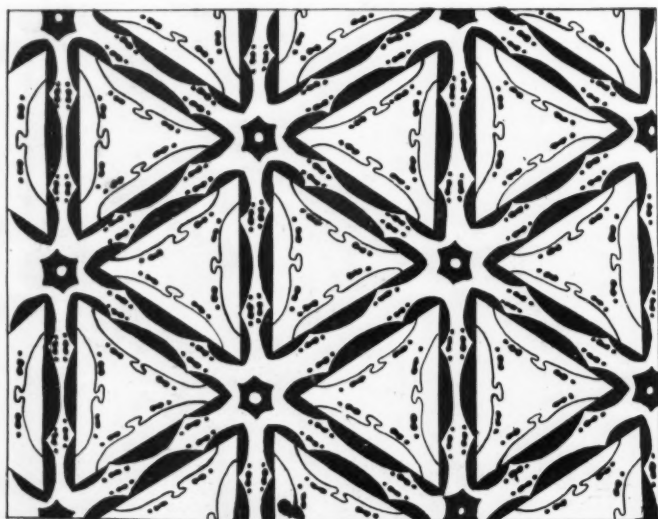
Katherine Taylor



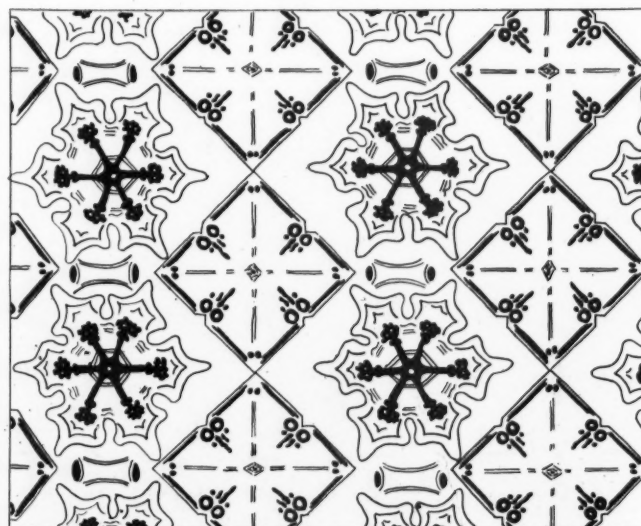
Thelma Bryan



Lucille Corless

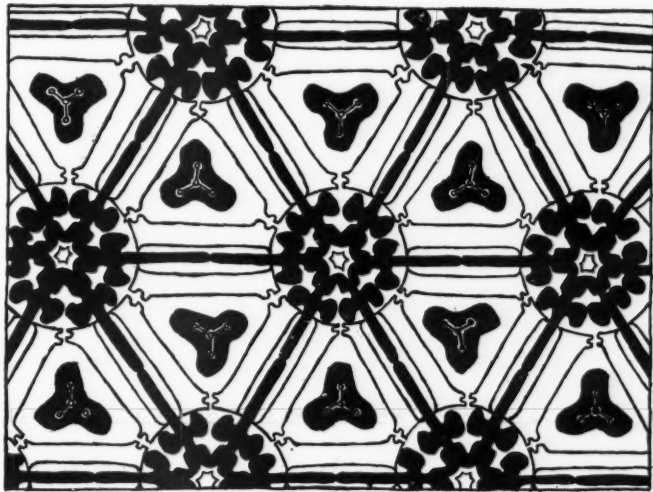


Cloreice Sudbury

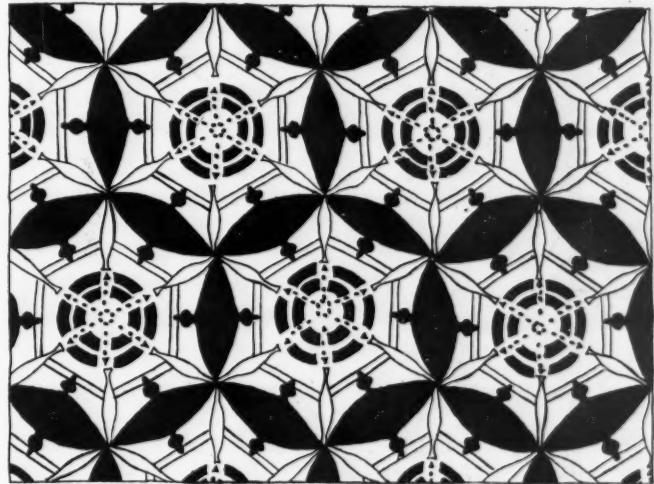


Varno Gilbert

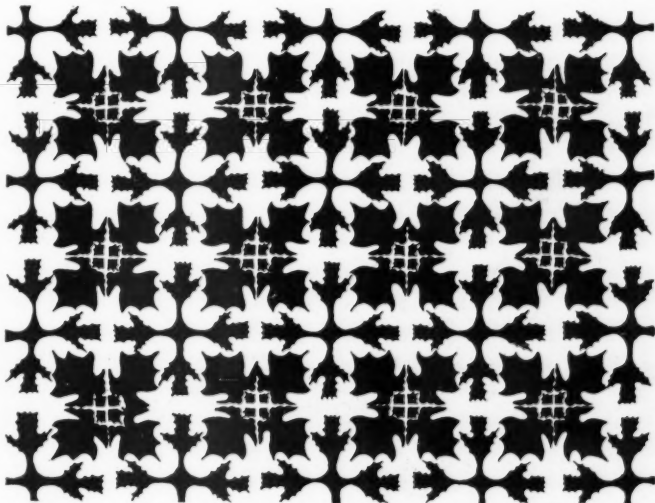
Snow Flake Designs by University of Utah Students



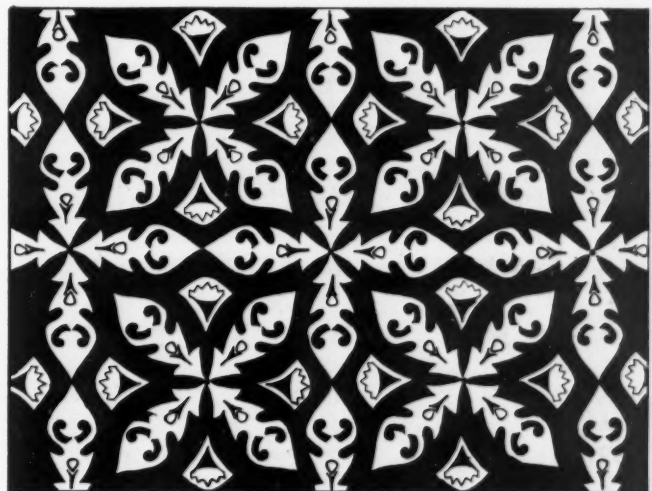
Blanche Coray



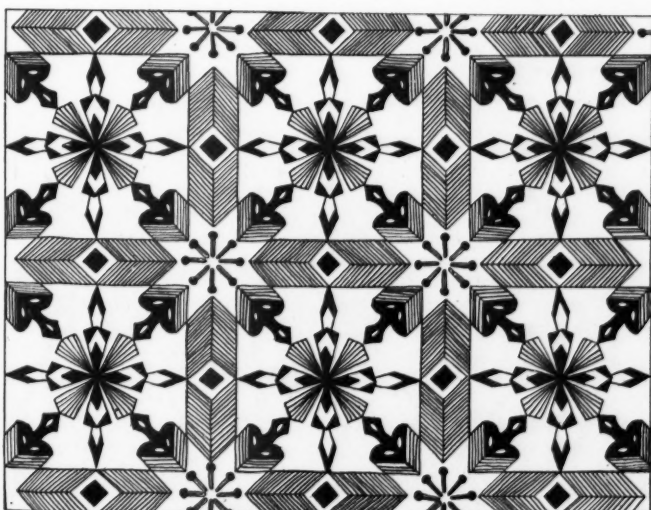
Edrie Thomas



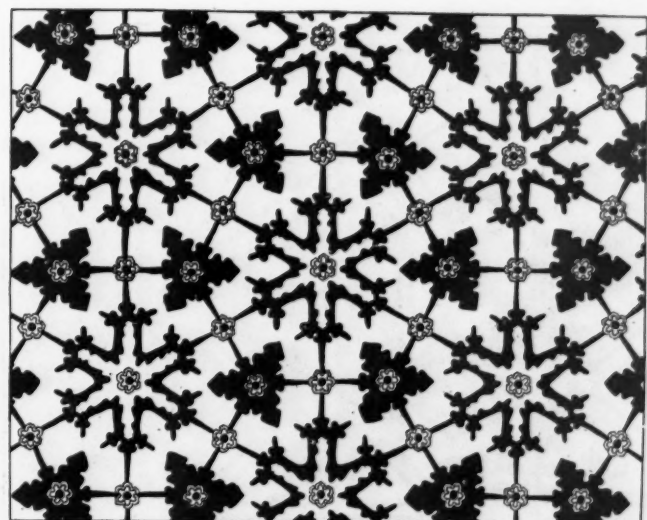
Frances L. Pitt



Leah Ekino

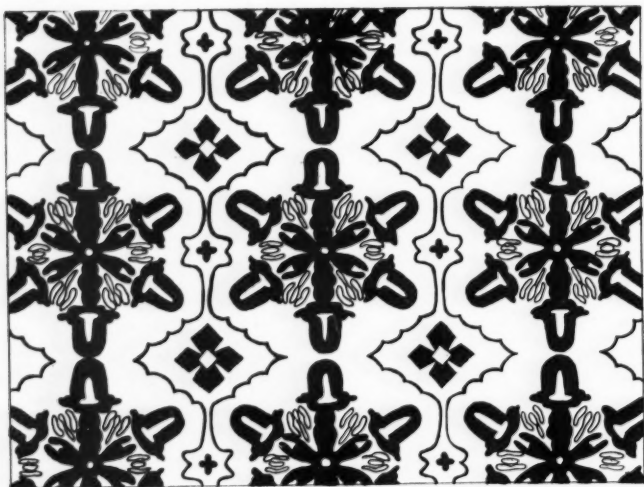


Alice Peterson

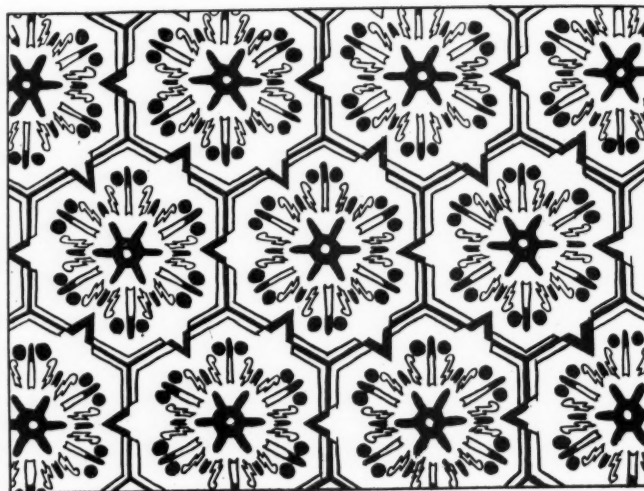


Annie Simminger

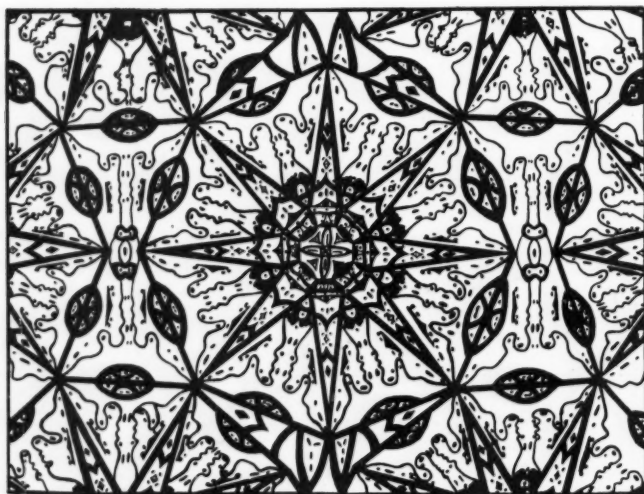




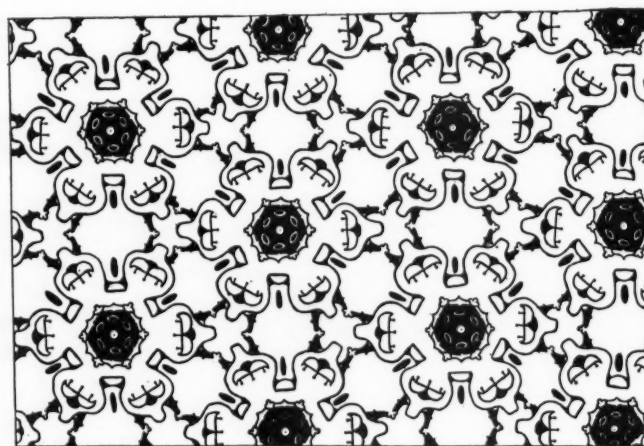
Lorene Wattis



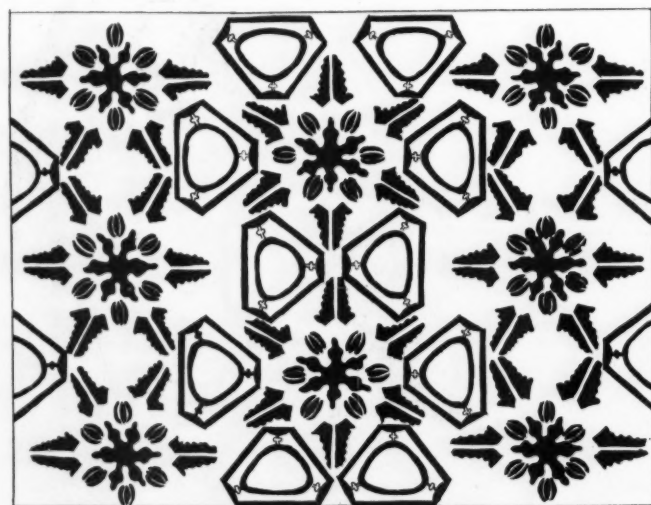
Isabel Broun



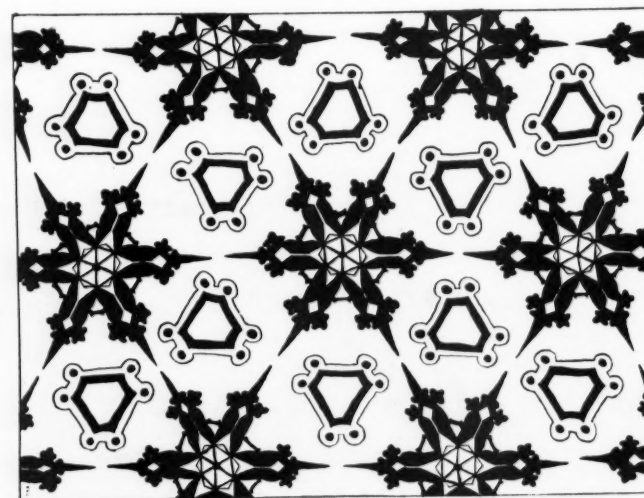
Audrey Miller



Verna Lundberg

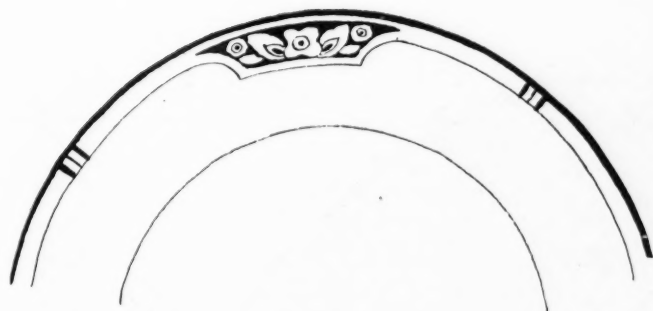


Catherine Rigby



Maurine Hanson





## BEGINNERS' CORNER

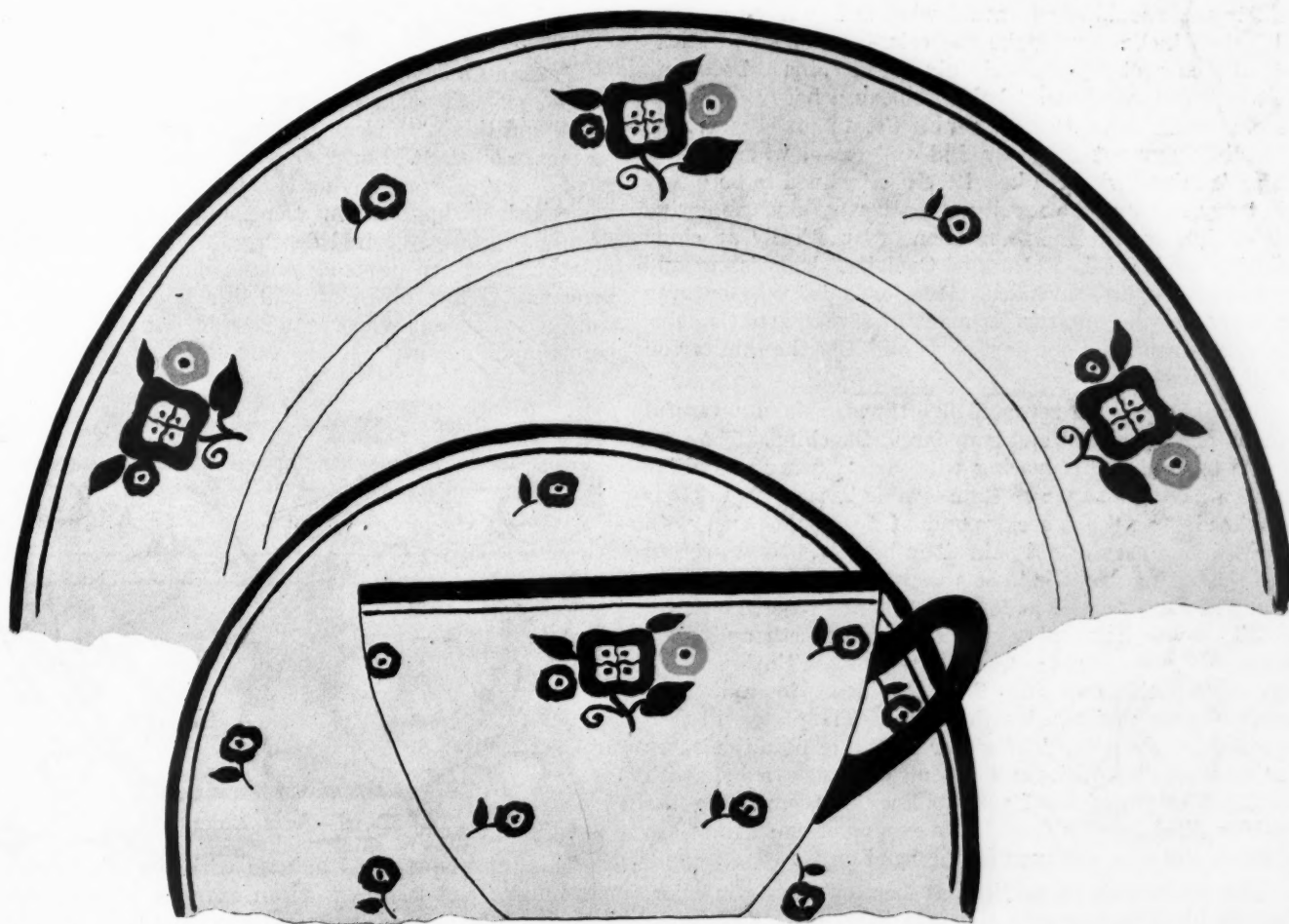
*Jetta Ehlers . . . . . 23 Sherman Ave., Newark, N. J.*

### BLACK AND GOLD

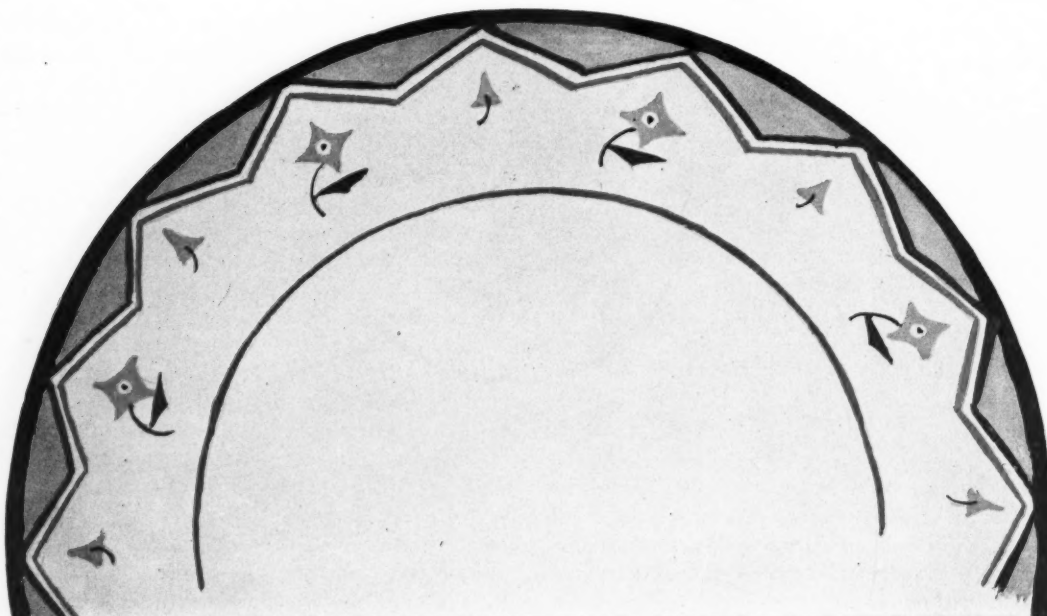
**W**E have been doing so much in color for our problems of late that for variety's sake we will consider for our work this month a plate design done in Black and Gold. This is a combination extremely rich in effect and one that is very attractive for rather formal service. For breakfast service one would choose something with a bit of gayety about it—nice color and simple decoration would be the thing. Most of us are the least bit "off edge" in the morning and so the most informal decoration possible is the happiest choice. Something with a gay touch of color about it starts the day with a lift of spirits, because we do respond to color

more than we realize. For luncheon something a trifle more formal may be planned, though of course the choice is influenced by the character of the luncheon. For a real luncheon party, of course, one's best and most formal. The same is true of the dinner service.

Pieces decorated in the style of the design given fit in very nicely with either the very formal or other type of service. Plates like these would be very nice for entree, salad, or dessert, in fact it could be carried out on an entire set, making a change from the regulation gold and white. The black does not appear nearly as heavy as one might think, the brilliancy of the gold balancing it. Then, too, a faint tinting of Ivory is used for the body of the plate, as the decoration would otherwise be somewhat raw against the dead white. For the benefit of those who have not read former instructions for using Black I will repeat the main points. The chief trouble most amateurs encounter is in the chipping or scaling off of the color. In the first place use a good Black, and in mixing the color, use only enough painting medium to make a stiff paste. Thin this with clean turpentine in working, not adding any more oil. Spread the color smoothly and evenly. No white of the china should show through and neither should the paint be thick. Avoid ridges or lumps, as in places like these the color will likely chip. Do not attempt to get full value with one painting but depend upon the retouching to bring it up to what you want. If you are careful in spreading the color as directed and avoid an excess of oil in the mixing you should have no trouble with the bug-bear of chipping.



Breakfast Set—Jetta Ehlers



Design for Plate—Jetta Ehlers

In passing, a few words about painting mediums. Everybody has a favorite brand and it is rather a proposition to say that any one kind is the very best. On general principles I should say to avoid what is known as a heavy oil. It is inclined to make the colors gummy and sticky and they can not be spread cleanly on the china. A thin oil, that is, one having about half the body a heavy oil would have, is much easier to work with. Colors mixed with such a medium dry out perfectly dull and clean, whereas that which is mixed with the heavier oil is inclined to be glossy when dry and has the faculty of gathering any wandering bits of dust to it. The foundation of practically all china painting mediums is Balsam of Copiaba. This is cut and modified with tar, lavender, clove, or anise oils, or even all four. A good mixture is made of three parts Copiaba, one part tar oil, and one part clove oil. Use the thin tar oil for this purpose.

The motifs to be repeated five times. Make a careful tracing of the pattern and transfer to the china. The next step is to outline this tracing with Black, using an outline medium having a sugar or Gum Arabic base. After this is completed lay in the background of the little panel with Black, taking care to not paint it in heavily. Next proceed with the tinting which is to be a very delicate wash of Ivory. Trenton Ivory is excellent for this though any good one will do. This will need to be padded until smooth and even. When this is completed, clean out any of the tinting which may have gotten over into the band, using toothpick and cotton slightly moistened with alcohol. The plate will then be ready for the gold. The center section of both the leaves and flowers is left white and the dots or spots are done with Black. The entire band surrounding and connecting the motif is filled in with Gold. The groups of small lines are of Black and it is also used on the band on the edge.

The design may be carried out most effectively in color. Use the black background and gold band just as directed. For the flower in the center use Yellow Red. The small

one at right is Violet, and that at the left is Yellow Brown. The leaves are Apple Green painted in full value. The gay color against the black background with the gold band is very attractive and would make a very good looking set of salad or dessert plates.

To sum up our lesson then:

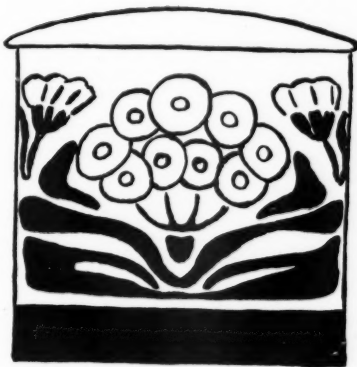
*Do not* use much painting medium when mixing the Black and thin with clean turpentine for painting. *Do not* add more oil for working. *Do not* apply this color heavily if you wish to avoid having it chip. *Do not* try to get full value with one application. Depend upon two paintings and firings to produce desired depth. *Do not* use a very heavy painting medium. Should you have to do so add either lavender or clove oil to cut and thin it. *Do not leave any* tinting on the band which is to be gold, but clean thoroughly before applying it.

♦ ♦ ♦



Bowl—Jetta Ehlers

This little bowl could be used with the salad plates for mayonnaise and is shown as an example of what may be done in re-adapting a design to another shape. Use either treatment given for the plate.



Cold Cream Box and Cover—Nellie Hagan



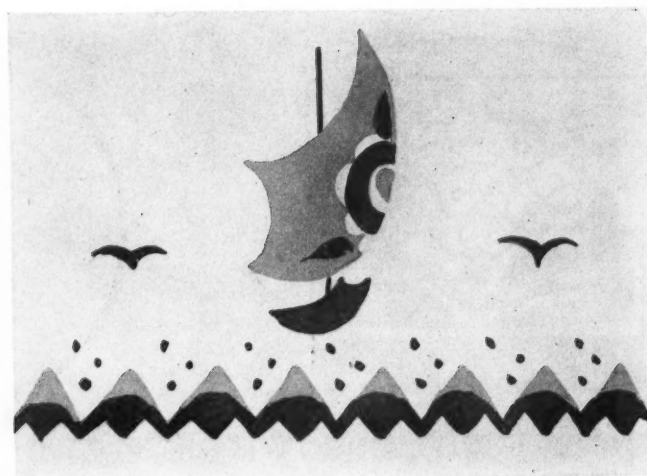
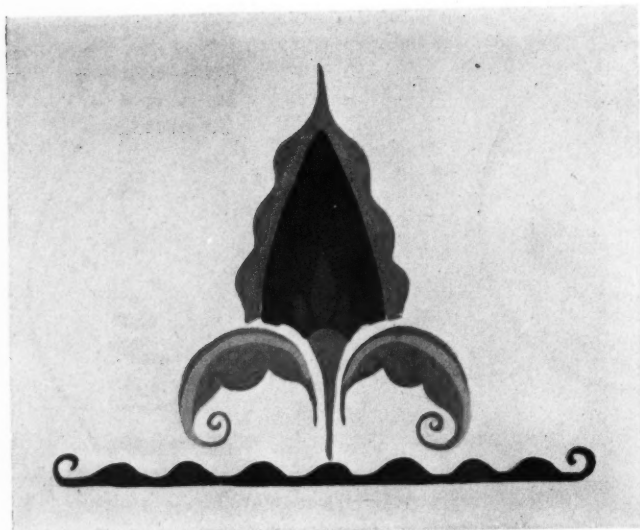
Salt Shaker—Nellie Hagan



MAY WARNER

Flower Motifs for China Decoration—May Warner





Designs for Towel Ends—May Warner

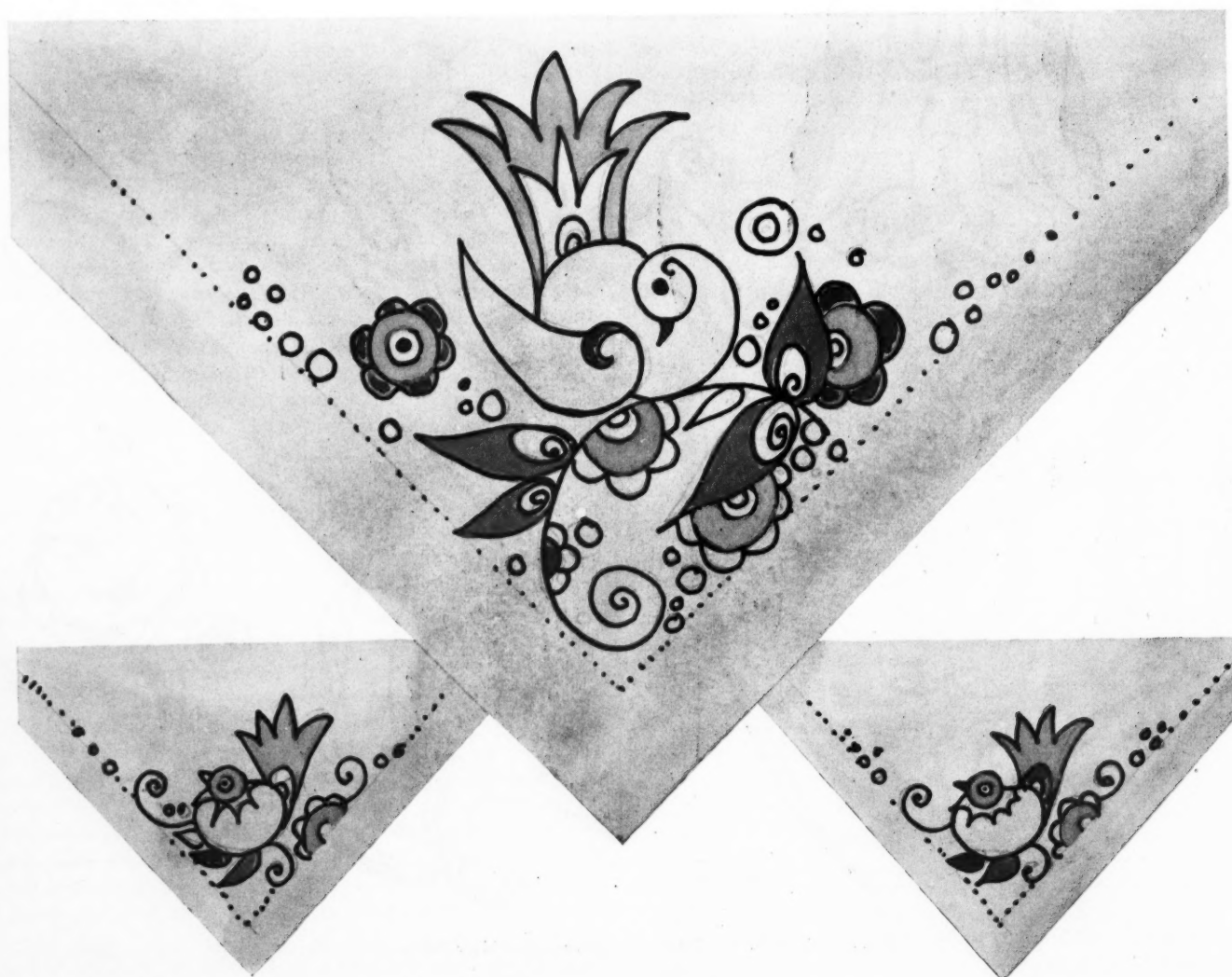


Table Linen Designs—May Warner